DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 455 PS 016 079

TITLE	Towards Universalization of Primary Education in Asia and the Pacific: Country Studies--Republic of Korea.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Bangkok (Thailand). Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.
PUB DATE	84
NOTE	34p.; In: "Towards Universalization of Primary Education in Asia and the Pacific: Country Studies"; see PS 016 069.
AVAILABLE FROM	UNIPUB, 10033/F, Martin Luther King Jr. Highway, Lanham, MD 20706-4391 (Complete volume $52.50 in U.S. funds).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational History; *Educational Improvement; *Elementary Education; *Equal Education; Foreign Countries; Program Descriptions
IDENTIFIERS	*Korea

ABSTRACT

This study describes the Republic of Korea's efforts to provide universal primary education. Chapter One analyzes the causes of the explosive expansion of the population eligible for educational services. Chapter Two reports strategies for universalizing elementary education. Chapter Three points out areas needing improvement, including class size, the instructional system and practices, and teachers' socio-economic status. (RH)

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Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development

ED274455

Towards Universalization of Primary Education in Asia and the Pacific

Country Studies

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PS 016073

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FOR EDUCATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Bangkok, 1984

This volume is one of a series of National studies of the progress being made towards the universalization of primary education undertaken by the following Member States:

Bangladesh	Papua New Guinea
China	Philippines
India	Republic of Korea
Indonesia	Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Nepal	Sri Lanka
Pakistan	Thailand

Towards universalization of primary education in Asia and the Pacific; country studies – Republic of Korea [compiled by] the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development, Bangkok, Unesco, 1984.

25 p. (Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development)

1. EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – KOREA, R. 2. PRIMARY EDUCATION – KOREA, R. 3. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION – PROGRAMMES – KOREA, R. 4. EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS – KOREA, R. I. Unesco. Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok. II. Title. III. Series.

372.95
372.951 95

© Unesco 1984

Published by the
Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 1425, General Post Office
Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Printed in Thailand

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BKR/84/OPE/410-800

Preface

Universalization of primary education (UPE) is one of the major priority goals of countries in the region of Asia and the Pacific. The developing countries in particular, are now vigorously engaged in the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programmes aimed at making adequate and suitable opportunities for primary education available as soon as possible for all children and young people.

In 1983, as part of a major project under the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) on the Universalization of Education, 12 countries in the region undertook national studies. The national studies were conducted to analyse the stage reached by the countries in UPE, and the problems encountered by them in providing educational opportunities to all children at the primary level; to review significant new and current developments in programmes and projects which the countries have undertaken in order to expand and improve primary education; and to contribute to achieving the target of primary education for all children. The studies were conducted by national institutes and professional groups under the guidance of high level committees of the Ministries of Education in the respective countries.

On completion of the national studies, a Regional Review Meeting was held in November 1983 which undertook an in-depth analysis of the methodologies of the national studies and examined their findings. The meeting also made suggestions for improving and updating the national studies tabled for review.

Following the recommendations of the review meeting, study teams in the participating countries have revised and updated the national studies. The present publication is an outcome of the collaborative and co-operative efforts of the member countries in understanding the progress made in the universalization of primary education, the nature and extent of problems and issues and their implications for achieving UPE in the region before the end of this century.

This series which provides a comparative view of the position of and progress made in UPE has been published with the view that the countries in the region, in their bid to step up measures for UPE, will find the information, experiences and conclusions useful in pursuing the goal of 'education for all' with a new vigor by drawing on the experiences of other countries with the same goals and objectives.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Korean education has witnessed many phenomenal changes in size, structure and function since liberation from Japan in 1945. For instance, the total student population, elementary school through graduate school, has increased from 1.5 million in 1945 to 10.78 million as of 1981. Specifically, by level of education, the elementary school population increased from 1.37 million to 5.59 million (fourfold increment), that of secondary school students from 0.13 million to 4.4 million (33-fold increment) and at the tertiary level from approximately 8 thousand to 800 thousand (102-fold increment), as Table 1 shows.

Table 1: Growth of Education Population: 1945-1981[1]

Year	*Elementary*		*Secondary*		*Tertiary*	
	Student	Growth Rate	Student	Growth Rate	Student	Growth Rate
1945	1,366	100	133	100	8	100
1955	2,949	216	748	562	85	1,087
1965	4,941	362	1,178	886	142	1,811
1975	5,599	410	3,150	2,368	297	3,801
1980	5,658	414	4,169	3,135	615	7,871
1981	5,586	409	4,397	3,306	797	10,196

In terms of the percentage of enrolment by eligible age groups, from 1945 to 1981, it is estimated that elementary school enrolment increased from less than 30 per cent to 97 per cent, that of secondary school from less than 4 per cent to 57 per cent and the tertiary level from less than 1 per cent to 18 per cent. Currently, almost all of the elementary school graduates advance to middle school, 97 per cent of middle school graduates enter high school and

85 per cent of high school graduates aspire for a higher education, though only half of them can be admitted to colleges and universities. In other words, the students' access to the next level of schooling has been greatly facilitated up through the high school level, but suddenly a bottle-neck occurs at the entrance into higher education. Hence, a host of students who fail to score well on the National College Entrance Examination, and particularly those who subsequently fail to pass the institutional screening administered by the well-established colleges and universities feel they have to repeat the national exam year after year. These repeaters, who are constantly preparing and cramming for the forthcoming year's examination, have caused a chronic societal problem and become a national issue in recent years. Because of the complexity of this problem, public criticism of the educational system has been increasing and drastic reforms demanded. However, the first concern of this paper is to trace the expansion of elementary education and analyse the causes of it.

Analysis of the causes of expansion

There are many causes for the explosive expansion of the education population in Korea. They are far-reaching and complex. For illustrative purposes, however, a historical review will be made first and then parents' endeavours to educate their children will be described.

All dynasties placed substantial emphasis on education. The first school system appeared in the year 373 A.D. The influence from China was substantial, as Korea adopted its writing system and literature, but the native Korean language remained unchanged. These borrowings of various systems from China were modified and adjusted to suit national conditions and then passed on to Japan, where they underwent further modification.

During the Koryo dynasty, there was a strong infuence of Buddhism on government. Private educational institutes were established for the first time in Korea when Buddhist priests began to teach local children at their temples. Later, the Yi dynasty eliminated Buddhism and introduced the Confucian system of civil service in a strengthened form, in which a scholar-literati class held all government posts by recruitment through national examinations. Schools, named Hyang-Gyo, were established in each county with

the one highest national institute located in the capital city. Attendance at these schools was exclusively limited to noble-class males. However, there were numerous one-room school houses (Suh-Dang) which were private institutes for teaching Chinese characters and literature and were opened to those who were motivated to learn and able to pay the nominal fees. In a foreigners' view, it was described as follows:[2]

> Generally speaking, education is a private affair and has so been considered from the first. Every village has its little room, always in a private house, where the boys sit on the floor with their large-print books of Chinese characters before them, ··· However high may be the esteem in which letters are held, the ordinary teacher is a very humble member of so-called good society. ··· He is treated politely by everyone, but he is looked upon very much as a pensioner. He receives no salary, but the boys bring him frequent presents, and he ekes out a living in some way. But there is a more diginified side to the question. Teaching seems to be looked upon as a thing that cannot be estimated in money value.

Thus, the Suh-Dang existed in almost all the villages, catering to local children for their primary education, particularly for those who were socio-economically disadvantaged. Formal schooling for girls was not provided until the establishment of Ewha School in 1886 by Mrs. Mary F. Scranton.[3]

The Korean alphabet, Han-Gul, was invented 536 years ago by King Sejong, who was concerned for those who were too poor to attend schools and women, who were segregated from attending schools. Han-Gul is an efficient phonetic alphabet which was designed to replace the Chinese ideographs and is so simple to learn that one can master it within a day. The mastery of the Korean alphabet was lowly regarded in comparison with the mastery of Chinese ideographs, simply because Hangul was not used in official letters during the Yi dynasty period. But the use of Hangul became universal among the people after its invention. As a result, the illiteracy rate has been kept to a minimum. This is the historical foundation which awakened Korean parents to the need to educate their children whenever they could pay the expenses needed for it.

Universalization of education – Republic of Korea

The Yi dynasty adopted a policy of strict isolationism for 300 years. This caused the stagnation and gradual weakening of the nation. A massive independence movement swept the nation on March 1, 1919, and as a result the Japanese modified their policies and then established the so-called Cultural Integration policy. Thus, Japan began to establish quite a number of schools for Koreans as Table 2 shows:

Table 2: Number of Registered Students[4]

Year	*1910*	*1919*	*1930*	*1937*
Primary Schools				
For Koreans	15.5	42.8	67.4	89.8
For Japanese	20.1	89.3	450.5	901.2
High Schools				
For Koreans	0.8	3.2	11.1	15.6
For Japanese	0.2	2.0	5.8	7.8
Girls High Schools				
For Koreans	0.4	0.7	4.4	7.1
For Japanese	0.5	1.9	8.3	11.9

Unit : 1,000

In 1939, there were 1,218,367 Korean and 92,842 Japanese students in the primary schools of Korea. Since the number of Japanese residents was 779,000 when the total population of Korea amounted to 24,326,000, almost every Japanese child of school age in Korea was in primary school, whereas only one out of three Korean children were in school; more than 60 per cent of Korean children were not able to attend any type of formal school.[5] Although the colonial Japanese government increased the total number of students, there can be no doubt that if there had existed a Korean Government, the number of Korean students would have increased much faster during the period. Korean tradition strongly favours education, and as one observer has written, 'The volatile, freedom-loving people of south Korea have high aspiration for educational and cultural advancement.[6] Thus, as the dam built by the Japanese colonialists collapsed in 1945, the tremendous Korean zeal for education resulted in the mushrooming of schools not only at the

elementary level but also at the higher levels of schooling. In 1949, the Republic of Korea made legal provision for six years of compulsory education for children from six to twelve years of age.

In addition to this magnificient obsession of the Korean people with education, parents' recognition of the value of investing in their children's education is another determinant in the expansion of the education population in Korea. Moreover, the catastrophe of the Korean War in the 1950s was ironically a substantial factor in the education boom, particulary in higher education. The Korean War was the most devastating tragedy in the nation's history, but in retrospect, it provided a great impetus for the people to rise up from the ashes of destruction to forge their own destinies. Thus, since the war, aggressive rebuilding of the nation has been pursued by the government and the people in every sector of Korean society. In this context, education has always been regarded as a cohesive force in the rehabilitation of the nation. Government investment in education has consistently had a high priority, next in importance only to the economic development plan and security. Parents have keenly realized the importance of education for survival in emergency situations, as well as in ordinary circumstances. With this felt need and foresight, parents have placed first priority on their children's education, often even at the sacrifice of their own standard of living. William G. Carr, who witnessed the Korean War as a member of the American-Korean Foundation, highly complimented Korean parents:[7]

> Eighty three per cent of all secondary school costs are now met by parents, consequently, heroic sacrifices by the entire family are necessary to educate even one child. Yet the popular regard for scholarship and education is so great that such sacrifices are gladly met.

With rising hopes for a better future for their children through education, the public has been eager to gain more opportunities in education, and the higher, the better. In this regard, it is interesting to note Kim Sang-Hyup's statement that 'there were some who conceived of college education for their children as a sort of general insurance policy against unknown hazards in a rapidly changing world.[8] In addition to the various forms of prestige and privilege bestowed upon college graduates, it is the relatively high rate of

economic return from university education in comparison with lower level education that has been a substantial incentive to go to college. For example, the average starting salary of university graduates in major industries is said to be about two times higher than that of high school graduates and four times higher than that of factory workers who have finished only junior high school.

In brief, educational achievement is a key determinant for upward mobility. Now, the level of educational attainment is not only a prestige symbol among the people but also a major criterion in the grading and selection of persons who aspire to get into decent jobs in modern Korean society. For the pre-war class structure was virtually wiped out by the Korean War. Under the constitutional provisions for individual freedom and equity, educational attainment has become a principal criterion for the assignment of persons to social and economic position. Ultimately, both parents and students have become highly motivated for education. This nation's widely spread respect for and recognition of the value of education has been the societal foundation for making the government's educational policies a sucess.

Chapter Two

STRATEGIES FOR UNIVERSALIZATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The strategies and approaches used by the Government to increase elementary education enrolment have been many and varied. A combination of available strategies for promoting elementary education has been both viable and necessary for the expeditious accomplishment of the goal of universal elementary education in Korea.

The political system is marked by two distinctive characteristics: its universality, and finality of force. Compulsory elementary school attendance has played a decisive role in the process of universalization of elementary education. Chin and Benne indicated that 'the changes enforced by political coercion, of course, need not be oppressive if the quality of our democratic processes can be maintained and improved.'[9] In this sense, the inauguration of compulsory elementary education by constitutional provision in 1949 is worth highlighting. The Constitution specified that 'All citizens shall have the right to receive an equal education corresponding to their abilities ··· compulsory education shall be free.' The subsequent Education Law of 1949 created school districts at the county level with corresponding boards of education.[10] In other words, at the outset, the idea of local autonomy in the administration of elementary education was implemented by law, which was helpful in promoting local initiative. The anchorage of a community school was envisioned in the law in order to best utilize parents' enthusiasm for the education of their children. In a sense, the indigenous idea of community-supported education, long traditional in Korean society, and the institutionalization of local autonomy of education in the United States were happily matched with the establishment of the Education Law of the first Republic.

With regard to financing of elementary schools, it was prescribed by law that expenses for elementary education be provided in

part by the national treasury and in part through an education tax levied by provincial and municipal governments. The law also gave responsibility to the central government for subsidizing the expenses for regional equalization of elementary education opportunities. Provincial boards of education also required substantial subsidies for disadvantaged schools located in remote areas and on islands. In the 1960s, the county level autonomy of elementary education and the educational tax system were abolished, although the latter was recently resurrected in a modified form. Therefore, it is difficult to make an exact assessment of financial investment for the universalization of elementary education in Korea. However, it must be emphasized that the budget for elementary education has been the largest category in the total budget of the Ministry of Education for the past two decades, as Table 3 shows:

Table 3: Percentage of Expenses for Elementary Education out of MOE Budget

year	$\frac{B}{A}$	$\frac{C}{B}$	*D*	*Year*	$\frac{B}{A}$	$\frac{C}{B}$	*D*
1948	8.9	69.4		1970	17.5	76.5	96.9
1950	5.7	74.0		1975	14.3	67.3	97.2
1955	9.3	74.4	86	1980	18.9	62.2	98.2
1960	15.2	80.9	82	1981	18.6	62.8	98.5
1965	16.2	72.6	95	1982	20.7	62.6	98.5

A Government Budget
B Ministry of Education Budget
C Expenses for Elementary Education
D Percentage of Enrollment in Elementary School by eligible age group

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Education, M.O.E.

Thus, Kim Sang-Hyup commented, 'For years, the Ministry of Education has been concentrating its efforts on the administation of the compulsory elementary education to the near total neglect of higher education.'[11]

Secondly, the government's policy of transferring expenses needed for education to the private sector has been conducive in expanding educational opportunities in Korea, particulary in the

universalization of elementary eduation. For the period 1945 through 1948, it is estimated that '··· about two-thirds of the operational costs of running the primary schools was financed by the U.S. Military Government and about 38 per cent of the school revenue at this level was raised through dues levied on members of the PTA for each school'.[12]

The first regime headed by President Syngman Rhee was unable to realize free elementary education as provided in the Constitution. According to the study quoted above, the central government could provide only 15 per cent of the revenue needed to finance primary schools, the local government only 10 per cent and the other 75 per cent of the funds for local schools was collected through Parent-Teacher Associations.[13] Even in 1974, it was estimated that 28 per cent of the expenses for compulsory education was collected through PTAs.[14]

The PTAs were introduced into Korean schools under the United States Military Government as a means to increase parents' participation in school affairs, and to solicit their help to supplement inadequate teacher salaries and improve school facilities. But the PTAs in practice operated merely as tuition collection agencies. After the inauguration of compulsory elementary education in 1949, a policy was made to collect PTA fees in accordance with parents' economic status. The Ministry of Education, for example, established differential categories of schools according to residential areas, such as schools in metropolitan areas like Seoul and Pusan, schools in major large cities such as provincial capitals, schools in small rural towns and schools in remote areas. Each of these schools had its own fee schedule. Each fee schedule, differing from category to category, operated on a sliding scale. Some allowance was made in the fee schedule of PTAs. Roughly 20 per cent of the families who were economically disadvantaged and all the children of the military, the police and educational personnel were exempted from the PTA fees. Other families paid fees on an ascending scale according to their economic status. Thus, parents were requested to pay varying amounts for each child who was attending elementary school. The classification of parents' ability to pay was first judged by classroom teachers and then finalized by the principal. Although the criteria applied were largely subjective and arbitrary in nature, parents remained highly co-operative with the schools. In a sense, the long

cherished traditional obedience to school authority and respect for teachers' judgements were the foundations for the contemporary system of school fee collection.

Thus, parents' school payments provided a major portion of the budget, including important and substantial supplements to teachers salaries. In Chang 'Yung Chung's estimation, as of 1971 the parent's financial contribution amounted to 26 per cent of elementary school expenses.[15]

The government's persistent effort to enlarge and improve both pre-service and in-service training was a third important determinant in the universalization of elementary education. Public-supported Normal Schools which were equivalent to senior high school were established in every province. Thus, already in the 1950's all elementary school teachers had gone through at least high school, which was an educational attainment considered adequate in most developing countries at that time. Since tuition was free and teaching jobs were provided by the government immediately after graduation from normal school, normal school was very attractive to those students who were able, highly motivated, and somewhat socioeconomically disadvantaged. In the early 1960's these normal schools were tranformed into two-year teachers' colleges. Recently some of these two-year colleges have been upgraded to four-year senior colleges. As professional teacher education institutes, these colleges have definite goals to train competent teachers. In teacher education, formation of a unique Korean cultural identity and national character are emphasized together with such personality traits as diligence, open-mindedness, co-operation, and discipline both in and out of the classroom. The qualification of teachers in terms of educational attainment has increased yearly as Table 4 shows.

Table 4: Level of educational attainment of elementary school teachers

year	*'52*	*'64*	*'70*	*'75*	*'82*
Level					
High school	98.4	84.1	59.4	50.5	29.1
Junior college	1.5	12.1	32.0	44.1	58.3
Senior college and above	–	3.7	8.6	5.4	4.9
Others	–	–	–	–	11.7

Source: Ministry of Education

Needless to say, the government's policy to increase the length of training for elementary school teachers is designed to improve the quality of education, for increased training will be reflected in improved instruction for and guidance of students. In the course of the development of teacher education, the United States government extended special aid for faculty development programmes at teacher's colleges. It was estimated that almost $9 million was used on this programme and 65 person-years of graduate and professional training of teacher educators was provided by George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee in the 1950s and early 1960s.[16]

Fourthly, the educational policy of automatic promotion of students to the next higher grade and special consideration for disadvantaged students have been effective in attaining low drop-out rates in elementary education. Children in elementary school are all promoted automatically to the next higher grade. This humane approach has been adopted for all eligible age groups at the elementary level in order to provide education on a more egalitarian basis. Government policy regarding compulsory elementary education has been inclined to emphasize universalization of educational opportunity; that is to say, a vision of equity rather than quality. Thus, at all grade levels, almost all children entering elementary school complete the programme within six years. There have been few drop-outs and very few repeaters. In 1967, according to a study, the attrition rate was estimated at an average of 2.1 per cent in the Seoul area at 0.8 per cent and the provincial areas at 2.7 per cent respectively. The causes for dropping-out were varied: poverty 54.1 per cent, not clear 17.4 per cent, diseases 11.6 per cent, dismissal 3.7 per cent, death 3.4 per cent and transfer 1.4 per cent.[17] Since elementary schools are located within commuting distance (on average 4 Km) by government policy, 99.5 per cent of students attend school from their own homes.[18] With regard to the government's effort to promote school attendance of the disadvantaged, it should be emphasized that Korea has had a relatively low level of urban-rural income disparity in the 1950s and 1960s. Mainly because of the Korean war, people in general were in a state of poverty characterized by periodic hunger in spring-time in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, Korean society, through government policies, gave special consideration to the disadvantaged. As mentioned previously, PTA fees were exempted, and free textbooks and lunch services were made available to disadvantaged students. In 1974, for example, it was estimated that '...

slightly less than one-fourth of primary school students received textbooks free of charge.'[19] About one-third of primary school students received a meal provided by the government. Therefore, these policy measures of automatic promotion, close proximity of schools to the students, cheap school uniform fees, and free supply of textbooks and lunches to disadvantaged students were responsible for high attendance and a very low drop-out rate in the elementary schools.

Chapter Three

TASKS AHEAD

The universalization of elementary education in Korea during the past three decades has facilitated national development in many ways. As mentioned earlier, under Japanese domination less than 30 per cent of the eligible age group of Koreans was enrolled in primary schools and, even worse, secondary and tertiary education opportunities were unavailable. As access to elementary education became universalized, it made secondary education popular, for those who finished elementary education were motivated to continue their education as far as their capabilities allowed, provided their parents could afford it. Thus, the universalization of elementary education has had a much multiplied effect on the nation's rebuilding.

First, as illiteracy was eliminated by the universalization of fundamental education, a firm foundation for a mass-participatory democratic system has been established for political development in Korea. In other words, the minimum essentials of knowledge as a base for informed judgement of political issues, which is a key element in voting behaviour in a parliamentary system, have been provided by popular elementary schooling in Korea. In this regard, the political socialization process in elementary schooling cannot be overlooked.

Secondly, in relation to Korean economic development, the universalization of elementary education and popularization of junior high schooling created the supply of semi-skilled manpower which was needed for industrial development during the 1960s and 1970s.

Thirdly, apart from the political and economic effects of universalized primary education on national development, some indirect but significant contributions need to be highlighted. For example, without the internalization of modern value systems which has been emphasized in civic education in elementary and

secondary schools, it would be difficult to achieve the national goal to reduce the birth rate from 3 per cent to 1.6 per cent over three decades. For rational thinking and responsible parenthood are directly related to the level of educational achievement. It has been generally proved that the proportional relation is reversed between the level of educational achievement and the birth rate.[20] In an empirical study in Korea it was also found that there is a general trend of reversed relationship between the parents' developmental value and their number of children.[21] Needless to say, a futuristic orientation and an enlightened commitment to a better life, which have been cultivated by modern education in Korea, motivate Korean people for national development as well as for betterment of personal welfare. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that universalized elementary education and the popularization of secondary schooling have been a firm cornerstone of the rehabilitation of Korean society from the ashes of total devastation by the Korean war. It is a self-evident truth that, however vigorous are governmental polices and the institutionalization of them, they may not be effective unless the people are equipped with an enlightened intellect and a motivation for achievement activated by various forms of education.

There are however, many problems unsolved and conditions needing improvement in elementary education in Korea. In the following section, some of these problems will be described and possible solutions set forth.

Classroom size

Generally stated, the increment in student enrolment in elementary schools must be accompanied by an increment in physical facilities, teaching personnel and financial resources. Otherwise the quality of education will drop. Unfortunately, for the past three decades classroom facilities have not kept pace with the expanded enrolment. As a result of the lack of space in elementary schools, the number of pupils per classroom was in excess of the legal quota of 60 all over the country in the 1950s and 1960s. According to a survey, as of 1967 those classrooms accommodating pupils in excess of 91, 81 and 71 constituted 7.1 per cent, 24.3 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively, with the total percentage of all schools exceeding the legal number at 54 per cent. On the other hand, there were

schools accommodating small numbers of pupils in the remote rural areas: the number of classrooms accommodating less than 50, 40 and 30 children constituted 13.8 per cent, 1.6 per cent and 1.3 per cent, respectively, of all the schools surveyed.[22] Overcrowding was worse in the lower grades (grades I, II and III) than in the upper grades. The degree of overcrowding also varied, according to the region.

Table 5: Number of Pupils Per Classroom by Region[23]

N. of Pupils Per class \ *Region*	*Special City*	*City*	*County*	*Others*	*Total*
91 and over	21.1	9.8	5.2	2.5	7.1
81 – 90	52.6	55.6	19.6	6.7	24.3
71 – 80	14.5	22.0	27.8	20.1	22.2
61 – 70	8.6	10.5	31.4	26.6	23.5
51 – 60	2.6	2.16	12.3	23.7	13.8
41 – 50	0.7	–	3.3	12.8	6.1
31 – 40	–	–	0.3	4.1	1.6
Less than 30	–	–	0.1	3.4	1.3
N	304	277	730	786	2097
Average	83.39	81.53	71.73	62.09	71.10
Standard Deviation	9.98	8.80	12.03	15.29	15.15

In an attempt to alleviate overcrowding in the lower grades, a temporary administrative allowance was made to introduce a system of two or three shifts. According to the study cited above, the nation-wide percentage of classes which operated on the normal basis (one-shift) was 85.6 per cent, while two-shift classes constituted 13.9 per cent and three-shift classes constituted 0.5 per cent of the total schools surveyed. When the schools which practised two or three-shifts were broken down by region, it was found that the major metropolitan cities constituted 21.1 per cent, cities 23.1 per cent, county level towns 10.5 per cent and other areas 11.1 per cent.[24] In other words, the schools in the densely populated areas have had to adopt the two or three-shift system more than the other rural areas.

The appalling situation of having two or three shifts has been alleviated during the past decade by successful economic development, which enabled the year by year expansion of school facilities, and by population control. Thus, it is now rare to see the two-shift practice even in the densely-settled sectors of the metropolitan areas.

However, crowded classrooms still exist in metropolitan areas. As of 1978, the number of pupils per class was on average 61 in cities and 72 in cities such as Seoul and Pusan, whereas it was 45 in rural areas.[25] On the whole, the number of pupils per classroom has been reduced considerably, although it varies from place to place. Due to population migration into urban areas, the class size in rural schools has been decreasing, whereas the reverse trend is occurring ing in urban areas despite the government's vigorous efforts to reduce class size by putting more resources into the congested living sectors of metropolitan areas.

So far governmental policy has aimed at meeting the legal provision to make the class size 60. Since the reduction of class size requires an enormous amount of financial resources, it must be implemented on an incremental basis. Currently it is projected that the class size will be reduced to 55 by 1986 and to 45 by 1991.[26] The reduction of class size is a prime requisite for the realization of effective teaching-learning practices in elementary education. Therefore, optimization of the class size down to 30 should be one of the most pressing government priorites.

Instructional system and practices

The instructional system and classroom activities in elementary schools have been almost uniform in their traditional method of lecture-explanation and recitation. Such varied methods as question-answer, discussion, practical work periods and experiments were used only in limited cases. The nature of assignments required reading a certain number of pages in the textbook and summarizing the main concepts. Homework requiring creative and independent thinking was very limited. Neither teaching in class nor homework was providing sufficient opportunities for students to develop higher mental processes. These outmoded practices were mainly the result of inadequate training programmes and practices in the teacher training institutes, and partially because of the overcrowded classroom. As

an example, according to a survey conducted in the 1960s on the teaching practices of colleges and universities in Korea, it was found that the most typical instructional methods were either dictation or lecture-explanation (63 per cent of the professors' reaction and 61 per cent of the students' response).[27]

Thus in 1970 a study team was invited to make a systematic evaluation of the Korean educational system with emphasis on searching for possible improvements of the instructional system and practices. Dr. Morgan, the team leader, stated that the focus of their study was, 'on those issues which would help the Korean Republic provide a better, more relevant education for more Korean young people at a lower unit cost and at a total cost not greater than the nation could afford.'[28]

To this end, the study team collected historical, cultural and educational data, including demographic reports, economic forecasts, manpower needs projections, educational fiscal data, current and long-range educational plans and such information as was available on educational objectives and attainment. They then proposed a new educational model which would require a number of changes in the Korean educational system, particularly in elementary and secondary schools. These changes included changing the basic instructional unit from the traditional class size to a larger grouping, introducing individualized instructional concepts and associated materials, modifying the role of the teaching staff and increasing the ratio of students to teachers, and using programmed instructional television and radio.

As an outcome of the study proposal, the Korean Education Development Institute (KEDI) was established and it initiated the so-called Elementary-Middle School Development Project to improve the instructional system and practices. The research team of the newly born institute determined that actual classroom instruction was often irrelevant and unproductive. Attributes of the worst classroom situation were identified as follows;[29]

> Firstly, the number of pupils per class is unmanageably large, making it difficult to increase instructional effectiveness. Secondly, it is impossible to provide an instruction which fully takes account of learner's characteristics. Thirdly, the instructional guide is oriented

toward imparting knowledge to the virtual exclusion of efforts to develop inquiry and analytical skills. Fourthly, the instructional process is highly labor-intensive and routine providing limited opportunity for utilization of educational technology. The above-mentioned problems have constituted a vicious cycle, resulting in low levels of student achievement and lack of concern for humanistic education.

The KEDI's E-M Project was aimed at all primary and middle schools in the nation to improve the effectiveness of the instructional system. It had the ultimate purpose of devising a more effective instructional system, viable in the indigenous setting of Korea. Thus, it took on the characteristics of a long-term project which required the full-cycle of research-development-tryout-implementation.

The KEDI instructional system model had five stages for a learning task: Planning, Diagnosis, Teaching-Learning, Extended Learning and Evaluation.[30] In the planning stage, teachers make lesson plans and management plans for learning tasks with a clear comprehension of the terminal objectives and the structure of the learning task, through careful analysis of the teachers' guide provided by the KEDI. In the diagnosis stage, teachers identify the specific deficiencies of students in prerequisites for the learning task and make provisions for remedial work. Diagnostic test materials are provided by the KEDI. Actual teaching and learning activies take place in the third stage using approximately two-thirds of the total instructional time allocated to the unit. Administration of formative tests, and provisions for enrichment, accelerated and supplementary learning take place in the extended learning stage. Evaluation is the last stage, when a test is administered. The instructional system model and the materials developed for it went through a series of tryouts from 1973 to 1980. The experiment was nation-wide and participation was on a voluntary basis. The number of students in the pilot study programme was quite extensive. For instance, in the fifth comprehensive demonstration, the number of students in the experimental group was about seven thousand and that of the control group about three thousand. At the fifth comprehensive tryout, the last of its series, all subjects covering all grades of primary school were examined in organized large scale experimentation. Analysing the accumulated data in varied forms, the study team synthesized them and made the following conclusions.[31]

Firstly, the new educational system contributes to improvement of student achievement. Looking at the results of five comprehensive tryouts, the achievement levels of the experimental group have shown 8, 10, 12 and 13 points higher than those of control groups in lst, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th comprehensive tryouts respectively. In addition to student achievement, the points scored in basic learning skill test of experimental group was higher than that of control group, and the achievement of middle school students who had been exposed to the new educational system in primary schools was higher than those of students from non-pilot schools. These results showed that the application of the new educational system brought a great deal of improvement in student achievements.

Secondly, the new educational system contributes to the formulation of desirable learning attitudes. According to teachers' opinions, the self-directed learning and co-operative learning gained currency among pilot school students, whereas the rigid teacher directed instruction was the norm in control schools. It was also proved through classroom observations that students in pilot schools were more active in expressing their views than their counterparts in control schools. And students learning habits improved: students were more inquisitive and their answers were more to the point after the application of the new educational system. These results reinforce the belief that the new educational system enables students to cultivate a positive attitude toward learning.

Thirdly, the new educational system contributes to improvement of rationality in school management. By introducing management by objectives (MBO), teachers were given opportunities for group thinking, with a resultant improvement of rationality in the decision making process. Since management objectives were the products of group thinking, they were reasonably attainable. Consequently, the consciousness of participation was enhanced among teachers and this gave rise to

a tendency of linking their personal objectives to organizational objectives. The provision for sharing of roles in preparing for instruction encouraged co-operation among teachers.

Fourthly, the new educational system contributes to enhancement of teachers instructional competency, most teachers (96 per cent) of pilot schools responded that their professional knowledge of instruction was improved by introducing the new educational system.

It was identified through classroom observations that the teachers of pilot schools carried out instruction with greater effectiveness than those of control schools.

In brief, the five comprehensive tryouts yielded empirical data in support of the effectiveness of the new educational system. The successful implementation of the tryout is owed not only to the inherent strength of the new educational system but as much to the unreserved support and co-operation of the teachers and administrators involved.

To check the possible reduction of regional disparity of educational quality through the introduction of new instructional systems, the KEDI team made a longitudinal study of the tryout results. It was found that the new educational system had a strong levelling effect on the disparity between urban and rural areas in qualitative aspects of schooling. As an example, at the outset, the base-line data disclosed a gap of 11-12 points in students' achievement between urban and rural areas. Rural areas showed lower achievement levels than cities both in the experimental and control groups. But after the fifth compreshensive tryout, the experimental group of rural areas showed higher achievement (76 points) than the control group of cities (70 points).[32] These results are indicative of the possibility of reduction in regional disparity of educational qualities through changes in traditional class activities and the supply of enriched materials. Some problems remain unsolved, however. Financial resources are needed for the nation-wide implementation of the newer instructional system, as are supplies of instructional materials. Teachers need re-training to provide them with the technical expertise required for adequate application of new methods.

Teachers' socio-economic status

The miracle of Korean development after its liberation from Japan and the devastation of the Korean War, is attributed to the high level of human resources that was developed early by popularization of education. And the governmental policy for economic development in the 1960s and early 1970s gave much support to the labour intensive industries which best utilize a diligent and devoted work force. There were a host of contributing forces and factors to make the development of education, society and the economy in Korea a Third World success story, as is well delineated by J.E. Jayasuria.[33]

It has to be emphasized, however, that the teachers' devoted service for betterment of education has been one of the key determinants. It has been suggested that the public cost of education provided is lower in Korea and that the public education system of Korea is more cost-effective than those to which it has been compared. Low costs have been actualized in two ways. Firstly, teachers are paid relatively lower salaries than those in other professions with equivalent levels of education and training. Secondly, class sizes are surprisingly large, though Korean people are accustomed to this. This has been of the utmost importance as a contributing factor in realizing the popularization of education in Korea, as it distributed the cost of instruction over more students, beyond the norm in other developing countries. Thus, a study team which made an analytical account of the relationship between education and development stated that, 'What is striking is that Korea has been able to provide a well-trained teaching force at relatively low cost.[34]

Bluntly stated, as Korea's economy grows, the teachers in elementary schools increasingly feel that they are unduly underpaid and in a sense that they are relatively deprived. The teaching profession, in general, is characterized by its dual or conflicting status: socio-culturally privileged, being respected superficially by the public, but mistreated in terms of remuneration. Needless to say, teachers who feel their profession has dignity and integrity can themselves behave with dignity and integrity. But when they feel they are mistreated by the public's derogatory attitude toward their teaching jobs, they may themselves begin to behave with inferiority complexes. Unfortunately there have been signs of this since early in the 1960s when economic development in Korea

started to take-off. According to a study conducted around that time, primary school teachers perceived that their society rated them very near the bottom of the vocational prestige scale. They put only shopkeepers, farmers and skilled craftmen below themselves in social esteem.[35] This is a striking contrast to the traditional respect for teachers; that is to say 'the King, the teacher and parent are the trinity.' Thus, the problem of teachers' feelings of alienation from professional prestige has been chronic and not confined to the elementary schools. It is so serious that the increment of the attrition rate of qualified and experienced teachers has become controversial in Korean society. There are some deterrents to entering teaching for promising youth: poor remuneration, little intellectul stimulation to teach in over-crowded classrooms, and heavy work-loads with clerical chores not directly related to the instruction and guidance of pupils. There has developed a tendency for the graduates of teachers colleges, particularly those from the elite institutions, to evade the teaching profession. Currently, it is estimated that the annual rate of turnover of primary and secondary school teachers amounts to approximately five per cent. The difficulty of recruiting able and dedicated youth to the teaching profession, and the internal brain drain from teaching to prosperous business enterprises are serious enough to pose potential dangers in the future for quality enhancement of education. Education is a process of planned change in human behavioural patterns towards socially desirable directions. And the effectiveness and vitality of the educative process rests upon the teacher's dedication to teaching, his vision for the future and his planning ability. In a sense, education can be no better than the qualification and dedication of the educator. Therefore, the deterioration of teachers' qualifications and morale resulting from their lowered socioeconomic status may have a negative impact on quality education. An ad hoc committee of the Korean Education Development Institute for forecasting educational tasks ahead stated this problematic situation as follows:[36]

> The anticipated advent of a highly industrialized society in the 1980s clearly indicates that the quality of teaching personnel may well deteriorate unless the incentive structure of the teaching profession is drastically improved and the teacher training system is reformed.

Summary

Korea is unique in the ethnic, linguistic and cultural homogeneity of her people throughout her history. The long cherished respect for the educated man and widespread enthusiasm for education of children has been one of the key determinants in universalizing primary education. The governmental policy to put priority on the investment of resources in primary education has also performed a decisive role in achieving universalization of primary schooling in Korea. In the course of educational expansion, the government's use of the bulk of United States educational aid for construction of primary schools was effective. It is estimated that, 'Between 1952 and 1966 foreign aid to Korea for education totaled about $100 million. · · · About half of the $100 million was spent on classroom construction of primary and secondary schools and could therefore be considered to have facilitated directly the expansion of education.'[37] The willingness and devoted service of teachers should receive due recognition. In sum, many forces have operated in the past decades to account for the universalization of elementary education in Korea. Thus, it has to be made clear that the descriptive accounts as well as evaluative comments made in this paper on the subject are exploratory and subjective in nature.

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